POSITION STATEMENT
Island Restoration

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Invasive species are one of the largest drivers of extinction especially on islands where 86% of recorded extinctions are linked to the occurrence of invasive species.

BIRDLIFE SOUTH AFRICA POSITION STATEMENT

BirdLife South Africa recognises that species extinction on islands poses a serious threat to global biodiversity. Oceanic islands form a critical part of many seabird species' life cycles, mostly as safe nesting environments free of land-based predators and in close proximity to their food source. Many seabird species have evolved to nest on these predator-free islands and have consequently not developed defensive behaviours to deal with introduced predators. The introduction of invasive species on islands is facilitated by human activities, such as international travel, maritime activities and global shipping.

BirdLife South Africa acknowledges that invasive mammalian predator eradication is the most effective intervention for protecting important populations of seabirds that breed on sensitive island ecosystems and whose populations are known to be adversely affected by these predators.

Therefore, BirdLife South Africa supports the use of the most appropriate measures required to remove invasive species from islands. In many cases, for vertebrate invasive species, lethal control is the most effective means of eradication (Parkes 2014).

BirdLife South Africa supports the use of current eradication best practice such as:

- following the most up-to-date endorsed eradication techniques employed in successful eradication projects on similar island habitats globally (for examples of islands that have been restored successfully refer to Parkes (2014));
- mitigating any impacts on non-target species which may include safeguarding vulnerable species in aviculture facilities during and after operations;
- adopting appropriate biosecurity measures to prevent further invasive species introductions.

While opposed to the general and widespread use of rodenticides (refer to BirdLife South Africa position statement on the use of rodenticides), BirdLife South Africa supports the use of rodenticide for the removal of invasive mammalian predators from islands that form a critical part of seabird breeding habitats (Preston et al. 2017).

References

Parkes, J. 2014. Eradication of House Mice *Mus musculus* from Marion Island: a review of feasibility, constraints and risks. In: Wanless RM (Ed) *BirdLife South Africa Occasional Report Series No. 1.* BirdLife South Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa. 27 pp

Preston, GR, Dilley, BJ, Cooper, J, Beaumont, J, Chauke, LF, Chown, SL & Henderson, S. 2017. South Africa works towards eradicating introduced house mice from sub-Antarctic Marion Island: the largest island yet attempted for mice. *Island invasives: scaling up to meet the challenge*, (62), 40.

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Giving Conservation Wings